MEMORANDUM FOR: Distribution August 25, 2005

FROM: Harry R. Glahn
Director, Meteorological Development Laboratory

SUBJECT: Follow-up to 2005 MDL Users Survey

Our annual Users Survey is an important factor in MDL's planning and tasking both in the short and long term (the results of the 2005 Survey are available on-line at the following URL: http://www.nws.noaa.gov/mdl/ffmp/survey_results05.htm ). While many of the results were not surprising based on other feedback we have received, some questions revealed issues that were not expected and need to be addressed. The survey results often indicate the degree to which some aspect of our work is either liked or disliked by field forecasters, and thus help us to prioritize our future tasks. The purpose of this memo is to highlight some things that came out of this year's survey and what we are doing to address them. Of course, this survey is not the only way the field can provide MDL with feedback. Please feel free to contact me or any of the MDL branch chiefs, Dave Ruth, Paul Dallavalle, Will Shaffer, Steve Smith, or Matt Peroutka, any time if you have concerns or suggestions.

From a strategic standpoint, MDL continues to reduce its role in basic product preparation software. The HWR, Climate, and LSR applications are being transitioned to other organizations. MDL has only a very limited and diminishing role in IFPS. The WWA software will be removed from AWIPS baseline in OB7. Also, there are new things coming down the pike that should prove very useful to forecasters: Gridded MOS, Gridded QPE for FFMP, Rapid update SCAN, the Four-Dimensional Storm-cell Investigator (WDSSII), a satellite-based fog monitor, a beach-scale rip current monitor in SAFESEAS, and completely revised LAMP guidance.

We are pleased to see from the survey that just over 70% of users are either satisfied or very satisfied with MDL's products. The survey revealed specifically that AvnFPS and MOS are MDL's most popular products with forecasters. We are also glad to see that over 90% of MDL's users found MDL staff to be either very helpful or somewhat helpful.

Attached is a brief summary of the survey findings for each MDL application or guidance product as well as a look at some of the specific actions we are taking as a result of these findings.

Attachment

Distribution:

W/ER3 - Kenneth Johnson
W/WR3 - Andy Edman
W/CR3 - Peter Browning
W/SR3 - Rusty Billingsley
W/PR - Ken Waters
W/AR1 - James Partain

cc: W/OST - Gregory A. Mandt
W/OS - Dennis H. McCarthy

**FFMP :**

FFMP continues to be very well received by offices affected by significant flash flood events. We are grateful for the high praise given in some of the written comments. However, the survey highlighted some dissatisfaction with FFMP problems following the install of a new AWIPS build. We have made it an FY06 task to provide a vastly improved FFMP configuration methodology that will guide users through FFMP set-up and greatly reduce problems associated with localization. We also will continue to support local, regional, and national training efforts for FFMP.

**SCAN:**

We are pleased that satisfaction with SCAN continues to improve year after year and more offices than in the past are relying on it in some capacity during convective weather. Some of the write-in comments indicate a general dissatisfaction with various configurable aspects of SCAN displays, alerts, and GUI's. As with FFMP, we will be working in FY06 to provide a more user-friendly set-up routine for SCAN that will help users set various SCAN options easily, to their liking, and without a lot of trial and error. Comments on SCAN continue to indicate the misconceptions at some offices that SCAN is an AWIPS resource hog. Performance has no longer been an issue since installation of the Linux workstations, and we will work to encourage offices to give SCAN a second look and to assist them in training and local configuration of the application. We also will use feedback received from the recent Severe Weather Technology for NWS Warning Decisions Workshop to make specific changes to improve the software.

**SAFESEAS :**

The survey results and written comments highlighted a lack of awareness of SAFESEAS. Given that this application has only been in AWIPS for little over a year, this is not surprising. Nevertheless, we have begun a campaign to work with individual WFOs with marine responsibilities to provide SAFESEAS training and to help with any configuration issues. We are also working to improve configuration of SAFESEAS and to make it easier to incorporate local observations. A new rip current monitor will be developed for SAFESEAS in the coming year. It will be demonstrated in southern California as part of the Coastal Storms Project.

**LAMP :**

The LAMP guidance was found to be quite useful to a small core of users. However, the survey comments indicated a general lack of awareness and understanding of what LAMP is and how it can be used. With the rollout of the new and improved central LAMP in the coming year, we recognize a great need to embark on a new marketing and training effort for the LAMP guidance. We will be working with the OCWWS training program to identify ways to meet these latent LAMP training requirements. With a better product and new training, we are convinced that the core of LAMP users will grow significantly.

**AvnFPS:**

The success of AvnFPS was a pleasant surprise for us. It is clear that this application meets the requirements of the aviation forecaster and meets them very well. Nevertheless, the survey comments highlighted a general dissatisfaction with the QC part of the application. We had intended to improve that function anyway, but the survey results have led us to do a major overhaul of it right away.

**NDFD pages:**

We were pleased that over 50% of forecasters use the NDFD pages either heavily or moderately. Concern was expressed about the forecaster workload associated with IFPS and NDFD. Based on the results of this survey, MDL will hasten our search for more practical, less workload intensive, methods for forecasters to prepare grids. Interactive techniques being developed for the 4D aviation data cube can serve as a model. These techniques are designed to maximize forecaster efficiency by taking better advantage of high-resolution model guidance.

**MOS :**

It is quite rewarding that MOS continues to provide quality guidance that forecasters rely on daily. Some of the survey comments asked for additional guidance. We're adding visibility forecasts to the NAM (or Eta) MOS guidance package in late August or early September. A new extended MOS package based on the 1200 UTC run of the GFS is scheduled for implementation in September. Finally, we will be adding approximately 70 sites to the GFS MOS guidance package this fall and early next year. When these changes are scheduled, users can check the following web site for details: http://www.nws.noaa.gov/tdl/synop/changes.htm

Communications between developers and users was also an issue. We've set up an MDL web site at which users can find technical documentation on the MOS products, including a new series of MDL technical procedures bulletins. See: http://www.nws.noaa.gov/tdl/synop/mdltpb.htm

We've also decided to upgrade our Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) web page. See: http://www.nws.noaa.gov/tdl/synop/faq.htm for additions.

Finally, many of the survey respondents asked us to improve the quality of the temperature forecasts, add ensemble-based guidance, and produce gridded MOS guidance. We're working on improving the MOS temperature guidance and on developing gridded MOS guidance, but we will not have enough resources in the near future to work on ensemble MOS products. Budget constraints are severely limiting our development activities.